

LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

Education

Executive Summary

The fundamental issues of the range of educational challenges for Latino youth must be addressed and solved through concrete goals, visionary reform and substantive change in public education. Performance gaps and positive and negative factors for Latinos in schools are inseparable from the larger social, political and demographic changes occurring in the Latino community. Fundamental goal areas include high school achievement rates, high school graduation rates, college-going rates, college completion and participation in high skill/high wage jobs and careers. Key areas for reform include establishing clear student paths, personalizing instruction, aligning standards with curriculum and instruction, maximizing intellectual rigor, ensuring life-long learning for adults in schools, and a data-driven belief in and commitment to the success of all students. Areas for growth include maximizing pre-school education, better teacher preparation and support, developing inclusive school cultures and communities, and ensuring that teachers represent the communities they serve.

There exists ample evidence about the lessened state of California's educational infrastructure. Virtual all agree that the answers to improving education for California Latinos and others as well is broad-based and fundamental change. That change must begin with adequate funding for all of California's nearly 7 million school children to meet the state's high standards, to become productive members of the workforce and to become the citizens and neighbors our society expects.

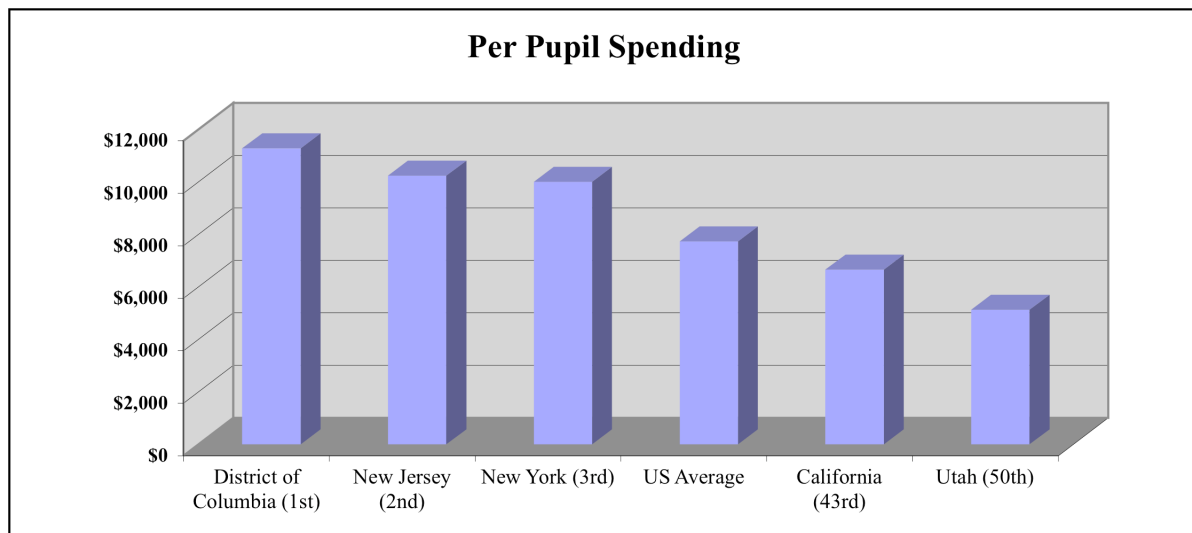
The issues are deep and critical. They require bold and courageous action on the part of the Legislature. The tough work in improving California's education infrastructure remains ahead of us. Among the many avenues for improvement, the following stand out:

- Revisit Proposition 13 as a way of ensuring adequate funding for education
- Invest resources placing California in the top 5 nation-wide in per pupil funding
- Offer a multiple measures approach to meet graduation requirements
- Provide high quality, universal pre-school
- Allow in-state tuition at UC and CSU for California children of undocumented parents
- Offer merit pay for bilingual/bicultural teachers in low performing schools
- Develop an inter-state consortium to share best practices in school improvement
- Support effective coordination of health and social services for all children
- Provide full-school-day kindergarten for all children
- Ensure the State's high quality teaching staff reflects the communities they serve
- Provide compensation that makes California competitive in attracting teachers
- Facilitate achievement of college readiness A-G sequence for all students
- Provide strong, multi-year, standards based Career Technical Programs
- Ensure that all adults in schools participate in high quality staff development
- Promote efficiency and savings by consolidating small districts & county offices
- Replace the current antiquated model for funding schools
- Adopt an 'adequacy model' to determine the cost of educating students
- Maintain a need-based financial aid program to assist students in college
- Provide incentives to schools which employ strategies of proven success

History/Background

California's population nears 37 million souls. The diversity of California's population represents more than 60 countries, making us possibly the most diverse place in the world. Half of Californians are immigrants or children of immigrants. Latinos will represent half of California's population by 2025 (PPIC 05). Latinos already represent a plurality of California's school children. The educational success of Latinos is in the best interest of all Californians.

California has a long tradition of policies aimed at providing equitable, quality education for all students. Yet, not all racial, ethnic and linguistic groups fare equally well. The recent history of California K-12 education is less than stellar. While many in California's educational community continue to strive mightily to provide success for all students and produce the workforce California needs, it remains an increasingly uphill battle. The inertia of the system, the increasing patterns of long-term underfunding, the labyrinthal funding formulae, the basic lack of trust in the system by many citizens, the complications of a large immigrant population and institutional racism all keep California education from achieving the success we expect. California has spent below the national average per pupil for nearly 30 years, although state academic content standards rank among the highest. Top achieving 15-year-old math students in the US are about half the number in other industrialized countries. To paraphrase Carl Guardino (CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group), 'California no longer has a first class K-12 system'. A significant portion of California's fall from educational preeminence began with the tax revolt 1978 passage of Proposition 13. In fact, Californians have fallen from investing over 5% of personal income in our schools to investing 3.5%.



US Per-Pupil Spending on Education (NCES 2002)

The history of K-12 education in California in serving Latino students is even more dismal. It has remained ineffective and even indifferent for decades in meeting the needs of California's soon-to-be majority population. Today's focus on gathering data has made California's service to Latino students more evident than in past years. California's Latino students drop out of school at higher rates, score lower on standardized tests, graduate in lower percentages, enter and graduate from college at lower percentages, and generally feel less empowered in school. In

addition, Latinos make up a full 85% of California's 1.6 million English Learners (1/4 of all California public school students).

Immigrants and the children of immigrants comprise nearly half of California's population. The good news is that grandsons and granddaughters of immigrants are consistently attaining higher levels of educational achievement than their parents and grandparents. However, low educational attainment among Mexican Americans, even by the third generation, remains cause for concern. (PPIC, 2005).

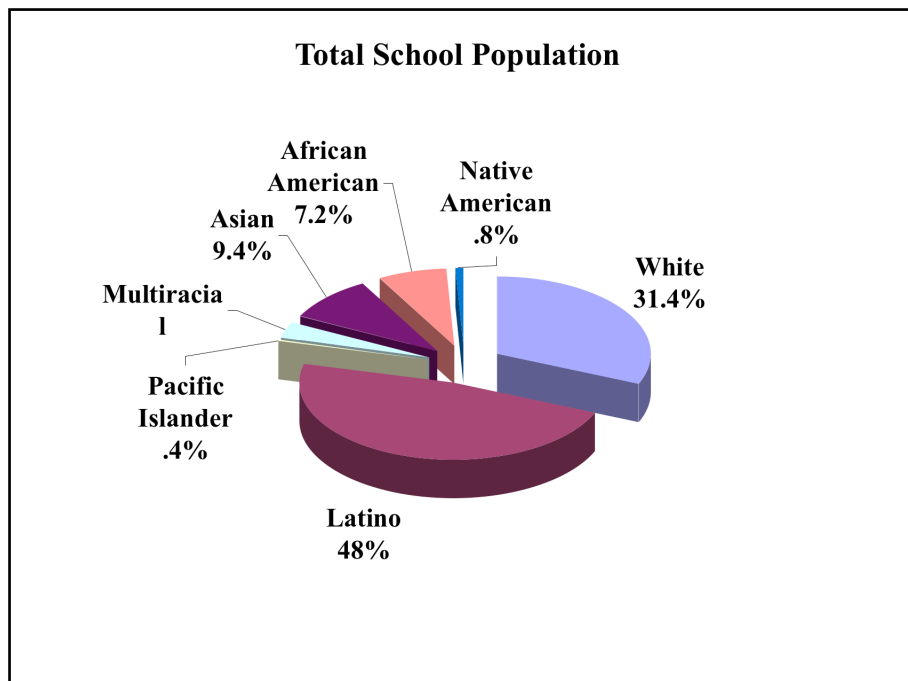
Current Conditions in Latino Education

Employment in California will grow by 30% to 40% in the next 20 years. Demand for workers with high school education or less will fall and demand for those with associate, bachelors and advanced college degrees will rise. At the same time, Latinos will become the majority of the population and a meager 10% graduate from four year universities.

Federal No Child Left Behind legislation (2001) requires 100 percent proficiency in every subgroup of students by 2014. While 143 districts (out of approximately 1,000) and 1772, schools recently identified as Program Improvement Districts (those not meeting Annual Yearly Progress goals) that number could increase to a third, half and virtually all California schools districts.

Preschool programs hold the promise of raising children's developmental proficiencies and their capacity to thrive at school. Previous research has shown that exposure to high-quality, carefully crafted preschool can boost early cognitive and language development among children from low-income families (PACE).

Only 10% of California Latinos earn college degrees (compared to 18% of African-Americans and 34% of European-Americans)(NCES 2001). Latinos who do go on to college, more likely attend two-year colleges and fail to transfer to a four-year university or attain a college degree (Gándara and Chávez 2003).



41% of white students are proficient in reading by the 4th grade compared to only 15% for Latino students (NAEP). By the twelfth grade, only 26% of Latino students have achieved reading proficiency, compared to 47% of white students. Between a third and ½ of all Latino students who begin high school in the US drop out of high school and fail to receive a diploma (NCES

2003) In Santa Clara County, 97% of ninth graders in the more affluent West Valley score at 'proficient' or above in meeting the Algebra I standards, while only 38% of their peers score as 'proficient' or above on the highly Latino East side of the Valley (SVLG, 05)

Latino families have traditionally not been as strong as other groups in advocating for their children in school. One percent of white parents have not earned a high school diploma. Twenty-seven percent of Latino parents have not (SAT). With a California counselor to student average of 850 to 1, Latinos often receive less personal attention in preparing for college.

Latinos also attend schools less prepared to facilitate their success. Many learn in overcrowded, urban high schools with disproportionate numbers of under qualified teachers and less rigorous coursework. Teachers in these urban schools tend to have lower expectations for Latino students and lower expectations for themselves in working with these students (Romo & Falbo, 1996). It has also become clear that the level of expenditures for teacher salaries in California between high-and low-poverty and high-and-low minority schools within the same school districts has created a hidden spending gap. More experienced teachers and with longer tenures, often the best-prepared teachers, tend to gravitate toward the district's highest performing schools (EdTrustWest).

Current Conditions Education

- ✓ 77% of Californians agree that funding for education has been effectively cut in recent years
- ✓ 71% of Californians agree that college enrollment will grow in next few years
- ✓ 80% of Californians believe that Community Colleges serve the entire community.
- ✓ 82% of voters agree that funding for public colleges & universities should increase
- ✓ Most Latinos who enroll in college after high school, enroll in community college
- ✓ Most community college enrollees have not completed the A-G sequence of courses needed for most four-year universities.
- ✓ Between 30% and 50% of Latino high school students entering at the 9th grade, fail to graduate. Latino students are the most likely to drop out
- ✓ 40% of those who enroll in community colleges fail to return after the first semester
- ✓ 40% of community college enrollees need basic skills remedial courses.
- ✓ Most California Latino high school students are in the 'general track' or below, not the A-G college prep sequence of courses.
- ✓ 15% of high school graduates earn college degrees within a decade of graduation, far fewer Latinos.
- ✓ Unemployment rates in California are 8.3% for those w/o high school diploma, 5.3% for those with community college degree, 4.3% with four-year degree.
- ✓ Eighth grade STAR test scores find 1/3 scoring at advanced and proficient, 1/3 at basic, and 1/3 at below basic or far below basic
- ✓ Dropout is result of student disengagement. Elements of engagement include:
 - Enthusiasm
 - Pride in Success
 - Active Participation
 - Seeking assistance when needed
 - Interest
 - Social Involvement
 - Completing work
 - Taking challenging classes
- ✓ Most vocational courses at secondary level do not provide significant benefit to most students
- ✓ California is 26th in the nation in percentage of income going to state

- ✓ 30% of all students don't graduate.
- ✓ EL students do significantly less well on CAHSEE
- ✓ Drop-out rate in LAUSD covers around 50-55%
- ✓ Latino and African-American students are those most likely to drop out.
- ✓ 21.6% Latinos meet requirements for 4-year universities (vs. 56.6% for Asians, 40% for all).
- ✓ 36% of those enrolled in pre-schools are Latino (47.7% Latinos in total school population).
- ✓ Fourteen percent of California's teachers are Latino, 47% of students are Latino.
- ✓ California has about 6,300,000 public school students (600,000 in private schools)
- ✓ California has about 9,300 public schools.
- ✓ California has about 305,000 public school teachers and administrators
- ✓ California ranks 1st in the nation in percentage of English learners
- ✓ California ranks 10th in the nation in proportion of low-income students
- ✓ California ranks 49th in the nation in teacher staffing ratio
- ✓ California ranks 44th in reading and math achievement

Legislative Efforts

There have been many inspirational and significant Legislative efforts in the recent past. Many more are needed to achieve the required achievement of Latino students. Recent proposed Legislation highlights the work. Among these are:

AB 1498 (Pacheco, '01)	Expands Class Size Reduction to 7 th grad math & English
SB 5 (Torlakson, '01)	Equalization adjustments for revenue limits districts
SB 973 (Ortiz, '01)	Appropriates \$1 billion for lowest decile schools
AB 1302 (Liu, '01)	Kindergarten readiness
AB 503 (Strom-Martin, '01)	Establishes a Dual Language Education grant program
SB 1595 (Escutia, '02)	Expands topics for parent info re English learner programs
SB 2083 (Polanco, '02)	Aligns English learner instruction with NCLB & Title III
AB 2413 (Diaz, '04)	Requires the CDE to develop primary language assessments.
AB 2698 (Goldberg, '04)	Incentive funding for dual language programs.
SB 1343 (Escutia, '04)	Child Care Master Plan
AB 2675 (Goldberg, '04)	Categorical programs block grant
SB 3017 (Firebaugh, '04)	AVID
SB 1416 (Vasconcellos, '04)	Weighted per pupil funding
AB 2416 (Goldberg, '04)	Reading First Program
SB 1421 (Vasconcellos, '04)	Parenting Education
AB 2407 (Bermudez, '04)	Kindergarten instructional time
SB 1795 (Alárcon, '04)	High School Reform
SB 875 (Runner/Florez, '05)	After School Career Technical Education
AB 9 (Coto, '05)	Increased funding for K-12 Public Schools
AB 628 (Karnette, '05)	Professional Development Block Grant
AB 1253 (Coto, '05)	Graduation Requirements
AB 1531 (Bass, '05)	Alternative High School Exit Exams
AB 953 (Coto, '05)	High Priority Schools
AB 1592 (Goldberg, '05)	Increased Instructional Time

The Future and Our Goals

The goals of the Latino Caucus include:

- To promote the professional, educational, social, legislative and cultural interests of its members, to maintain an informed membership, and to enhance the leadership potential of its members;
- To increase participation by Latinos and Latinas in the California Legislature, and to advise the Legislature and the Executive branch of government on matters affecting the Latino community;
- To serve as a resource to, and advocate on behalf of the professional educational, social, political and cultural concerns of the Latino community;
- To develop and carry out programs and policies that further the interests of the Latino Caucus.

The Education Priorities of the Latino Caucus include:

- Ensure that all Latino children attend pre-school
- Provide solid and well-funded programs for English Language Learners
- Increase the number of Latinos who attend and graduate from college

Recommended Action

There is a constant tension between the call for funding and the call for greater effectiveness in our state's K-12 system. It is further complicated by an international labor force that is increasingly well educated and instantly accessible.

In an innovation economy, the key piece of "infrastructure" remains our K-12 system. These actions are recommended to assist in achieving concrete goals, visionary reform and substantive change.

1. Revisit Proposition 13

The landmark 1978 initiative capped property taxes for many homeowners. Today it often costs more in service provision for households than governments can realize in taxes. And, perhaps Proposition 13 did not intend to put the same constrictions on corporate property tax that they imposed on residential property tax (PPIC '05). California education remains crippled by the lack of resources that could be generated in property taxes.

2. Invest in Education Now

California has attempted to cope with its budget problems without raising taxes. The trends indicate that this short-term temporizing will shoot California in the foot – economically and socially. Education is one area where California's citizens have indicated they will accept higher taxes. Does Sacramento have the political will to ask the public to ante up?

3. Develop Multiple Measures for High School Graduation

Virtually all educational research and all educational theorists agree that to measure the success or achievement of California's students with one objective test is neither sensitive to their learning nor accurate. Those opposed to multiple measures fear it will be used as

a vehicle for lessening the hard won standards. At hostage are students who do not yet speak English and students whose achievement cannot be accurately measured with the current one test.

4. Provide High Quality Universal Pre-School
Consolidate and expand funding for pre-school services and enhance developmental screening in the earliest years of life (State Master Plan Recommendation).
Children who attend high-quality pre-schools have higher rates of school readiness, better language ability and math skills, and fewer behavior problems, suggest longitudinal studies. The benefits of pre-school not only affect the life of the individual child, but the entire community.
5. Allow In-State Tuition at UC and CSU for California Children of Undocumented Parents
6. Develop Inter-State Consortia Approaches to Educational Improvement
States ‘solving’ the problems alone can lead to ‘reinventing the wheel’ and not take advantage of the opportunity to broker best practices solutions among states or learn from *schools of excellence*.
7. Support Effective Coordination of Health and Social Services
This support should be for all children, beginning with services that meet young childrens’ developmental needs, at sites that are conveniently accessible to families. (State Master Plan Recommendation)
8. Provide Full School-Day Kindergarten for All Children. (State Master Plan Recommendation and LAUSD plan)
9. Develop Programs to Attract and Support Well Qualified Teachers
The State’s high quality teaching staff should reflect in ethnicity, language, and social customs of the communities they serve. School Districts should develop programs to attract talented teachers, recruit strong candidates, provide well-developed induction programs, and support teachers throughout their beginning years in teaching.
10. Maintain Competitive Teacher Compensation Plan
California should maintain a teacher compensation schedule that makes it competitive in attracting and retaining excellent teachers, administrators and classified staff. (Master Plan Recommendation).
11. Facilitate Completion of A-G Sequence of Courses
California should enroll all entering 9th grade students in either the A-G sequences of classes required for admission to UC/CSU or in a well developed, multi-year, standards based, CTE program. This approach ensures that all students have access to these critical programs and that California has the workforce it needs for the next generation.
12. Offer Quality Professional Development
California must ensure that all adults working in schools are engaged in life-long learning through coherent professional development programs. Such programs must be based on best practices and take into account adult learning theory.
13. Consolidate Some School Districts and County Offices of Education
One and two school school districts should be unified with larger surrounding districts (25 of California’s school districts have fewer than 27 students). County offices of education serving total populations of fewer than 300,000 inhabitants should be unified with larger nearby county offices of education.
14. Direct the Replacement of the Current Funding Model
The Legislature should develop a simpler, more direct annual state per-pupil allocation.

Criteria should include per-pupil funding based on enrollment and per-pupil funding based on special need. The tax base funding model which benefits fewer than 40 of California's 1,000 districts should be discontinued.

15. Agree upon Adequacy Model

The Legislature should agree on an 'Adequacy Model' that accurately reflects what it costs to educate California's students to meet our highest in the nation standards.

16. Develop Need-Based Financial Aid

The State should maintain a need-based financial aid and scholarship program to assist students from low-income backgrounds to pursue their educational objectives in a California college or university (State Master Plan Recommendation).

17. Provide Incentives to Schools

The Legislature should provide incentives to schools which employ strategies of proven success, including (EdSource):

- a. Careful, unrelenting focus on student achievement with well defined plans (based on assessment data) for instructional improvement.
- b. Principals and teachers who set measurable goals to exceed mandated API targets.
- c. Implementation of coherent, standards-based curricula & instructional program.
- d. Districts practices which show data driven, tangible support for schools' tight focus on student achievement